

ENCYCLOPEDIA
— OF —
CONNECTICUT BIOGRAPHY
GENEALOGICAL—MEMORIAL

REPRESENTATIVE CITIZENS

Compiled with the Assistance of a
Capable Corps of Advisers and Contributors

ILLUSTRATED

THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY (INC.)

NEW YORK

PUBLISHERS

CHICAGO

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BIOGRAPHY

and the following year accepted a similar position in addition from the Port Chester Water Company. He has attained success in his chosen field, and has been more fortunate than most men for the reason that since accepting his first position he has followed similar lines.

Mr. Willson is a Republican, and takes more than a passive interest in public affairs. Fraternally, he is a member of Acacia Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, of Greenwich.

Mr. Willson married (first) July 23, 1902, Victoria D. Sublett, of Petersburg, Virginia, who died June 12, 1911. He married (second) Florence L. Close, born September 12, 1886, daughter of Peter Voorhis and Anna Sutherland (Thomas) Close (see Close line).

(The Close Line).

The name Close is of agricultural origin, though intimately associated with ecclesiastical usage, in which it is applied specifically to denote the precinct of a Cathedral or Abbey. Lower's "Patronymica Britannica" defines it as follows: "Close, any piece of ground that is enclosed with hedge, wall or water." The word is from the Latin *clausus*, past participle of *claudo*, and meaning closed, enclosed, surrounded. The spelling of the name has varied with the custom of the times and the degree of literacy of its writers, Cloos, Closes, Closs, Clos, Clusse, Cluss, being various renderings of the name now used as Close.

According to Hotten's lists of emigrants to America, Phettyplace Close came to Virginia in 1608, and was granted a patent of one hundred acres of land on the James river, in the corporation of Henrico, in 1626. In response to an inquiry as to him, the secretary and librarian of the Virginia Historical Society, under date of May 29, 1908, states that

he has no "evidence to show whether Phettyplace Close (Clause) left a family. * * * As the name does not appear here later, I think that he was one of the numerous settlers who succumbed to disease or was killed by the Indians." The name of Close in New England first appears in the will of William Frost, of Fairfield, Connecticut, dated January 6, 1644, where one Goodman Close is mentioned as having one of the testator's heifers. Goodman Close probably died at Fairfield, about 1653, and left surviving him his widow Elizabeth and the following children: Hannah, Thomas, Joseph, and Mary. His widow afterwards married George Stuckey, had one child, Elizabeth Stuckey, and died in Stamford, Connecticut, September 4, 1656. George Stuckey bought land at Windsor, Connecticut, in 1640, sold out in 1645, and later removed to Stamford, Connecticut, with his stepchildren.

According to the records, the Close family in New England, in 1660, consisted of Hannah Close, who, June 9, 1657, married Joshua Knapp; Thomas Close, and Mary Close, who, June 26, 1668, married Samuel Holly. A search of the parish registers for County York, England, seems to indicate that Goodman Close was born in Grinton parish, where the family attained considerable prominence about 1606, came to America about 1642, and finally settled in Fairfield, Connecticut, where he died. He and his wife Elizabeth had children: Hannah, born about 1632; Joseph, born about 1634; Thomas, of whom further; Mary, born about 1640.

Thomas Close, son of Goodman Close, was born about 1637, and died in Greenwich, Connecticut, in 1709. He settled permanently in Greenwich, and was one of the original patentees named in the patent granted to the town of Greenwich

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BIOGRAPHY

by the General Assembly in May, 1665. He was a member of the General Assembly in 1701. His will was dated December 30, 1708, and probated in 1709. He married, in 1669, Sarah Hardy, daughter of Richard and Ann (Husted) Hardy. Children: Sarah, born December 10, 1670; Hannah, born March 12, 1672; Thomas, born December 16, 1674; Joseph, of whom further; Benjamin, born May 18, 1679; Mary, born in 1682; Elizabeth, born August 5, 1684; Ruth, born November 1, 1687; John, born April 8, 1689; and Lydia, born in 1690.

Joseph Close, son of Thomas Close, was born November 20, 1676, and died October 4, 1760. He married, in 1701, Rebecca Tompkins, born in 1679, died November 13, 1761. Children: Joseph (2), of whom further; Elizabeth, born July 11, 1704; Solomon, born June 23, 1706.

Joseph (2) Close, son of Joseph (1) Close, was born September 20, 1702, and died January 4, 1760. He married (first) May 29, 1728, Eunice Hait, who died March 7, 1740. He married (second) July 26, 1744, Mary Merritt. Children, all by his first wife: Joseph, born July 21, 1729; Eunice, born May 10, 1731; Jerusha, born April 21, 1733; Odle, of whom further.

Odle Close, son of Joseph (2) Close, was born October 22, 1738, and died April 26, 1812. He was an officer in the Revolution. He married, December 16, 1756, Bethia Reynolds, daughter of Gideon Reynolds, born February 27, 1742, died February 17, 1832. Children: Odle (2), born January 11, 1758; Bethia, born May 6, 1760; Gideon, born December 6, 1762; Gilbert, born March 7, 1765; Jonathan Odle, of whom further; Mary, born April 16, 1770; Tompkins, born May 11, 1772; Eunice, born August 12, 1774; Elizabeth, born July 16, 1776; Shadrach, born Feb-

ruary 9, 1779; and Nancy, born March 17, 1781.

Jonathan Odle Close, son of Odle Close, was born December 6, 1768; married (first) Mary Mead, born January 10, 1775, died April 3, 1805; married (second) May 21, 1806, Rebecca Lyon, born November 10, 1765, died May 19, 1858. Children, all by first wife: Elizabeth, born March, 1793; Gilbert; Horace, born 1796; William; and Jonathan Allen, of whom further.

Jonathan Allen Close, son of Jonathan Odle Close, was born in 1802, and died February 10, 1875. He was a farmer, a Democrat in politics, and a Methodist. For several terms he served in the Legislature, and was also selectman for the town of Greenwich, as well as holding other minor offices. He married Mary Hart, of White Plains, New York, born in January, 1803, died January 31, 1879. Children: Allen Hart, of whom further; Mary; George W.; and Martha.

Allen Hart Close, son of Jonathan A. Close, was born April 26, 1829, and died May 8, 1904. He was educated in the Greenwich Academy, and lived on the homestead, where he followed farming for many years. In politics he was a Democrat, and held the office of justice of the peace and assessor. He was one of the organizers of the Greenwich Water Company. Mr. Close was of an inventive mind, and although he did not enter this field from a commercial standpoint, many of his appliances were in use on his own farm. He married, March 14, 1854, Gertrude Voorhis Spencer. She was descended from Steven Coerte Van Voorhees, who came to this country in April, 1660, from Holland. Children: Jonathan Allen, born February 11, 1856; Jacob Voorhis, born June 19, 1859; Peter Voorhis, of whom further; and Hannah Gertrude, born July 13, 1864.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BIOGRAPHY

Peter Voorhis Close, son of Allen Hart Close, was born December 20, 1860, in Greenwich, Connecticut, and attended the public schools there and Greenwich Academy. He learned the mason's trade and afterward farmed on the old Close homestead at Clapboard Ridge. For the last twenty-five years he has carried on a building and jobbing business in New York City. He married, November 18, 1885, at Greenwich, Anna Sutherland Thomas, born July 14, 1866, at New York City, died December 21, 1917, at Greenwich, Connecticut, daughter of Daniel and Mary (Sutherland) Thomas. Children: 1. Florence Livingston, married, September 10, 1912, William Jay Willson (q. v.). 2. Walter Guion, born December 3, 1888, married Elizabeth Hull Jones, and has one child, Allen Thomas, born March 8, 1917. 3. Harold Thomas, born July 28, 1892; he enlisted in the Twelfth Company, C. C. A. N. G., Greenwich, Connecticut, trained at Fisher's Island and Fort Wright, New York, and was mustered into the regular army, in August, 1917. Afterward he was transferred to Battery E, Fifty-sixth Coast Artillery Corps, and was on the Aisne-Marne and Meuse-Argonne fronts. In all he served twenty-seven months, from June 14, 1917, to September 24, 1919.

BURLEY, Captain Walter,

Master Mariner.

The name of Burley is an ancient one, having originated in England. It may have been derived from burler, a dresser of cloth, burly, boisterous, or compounded from bur, burgh, elevated, and ley, meaning untilled ground, viz., high and untilled ground. Burgh also means a fortification, a castle, and ley, leigh, means a field, viz., a castle on the field, or defense of the lowly. The vari-

ations in spelling the name have been Burleigh, Borleigh, Burghly, Burghley, Birgeley, Burley, Berley, Birley, Burlie, Burle, Burlly, Bourle, Burly, Budley, Burdley, Berdley, Birdley, Birdly, Bodley, Borley, Barley, Burles, Beareley, Brally, Brally, Bowley, Burhely, and perhaps Burleson and Burlison.

Giles Burley was an inhabitant of Ipswich in 1648, and a commoner in 1664. Felts' "History of Ipswich" says of the little we learn of Gyles Budley, "he left a wife, Elizabeth, and children, Andrew, James, Giles, and perhaps John, the youngest, who probably died before his father. He was a planter, living eight years on Brooke street, and owning division lot No. 105, situated upon Great Hill, Hogg Island. On June 13, 1668, Goodwife Birdley had granted trees for one hundred rayles and one hundred posts. February 23, 1669, Rebecca, widow of Giles Birdley, married Abraham fitt of Ipswich. Inventory of his estate amounted to £241 4s. 6d."

An American branch of the family bears arms as follows:

Arms—Paly of six argent and gules, on a chief paly six crescents all counterchanged.

Crest—A stag's head erased gules.

Captain Walter Burley was a son of Samuel Burley, grandson of Silas Burley, and great-grandson of Henry Burley, who died in February, 1776. Henry Burley's wife, Sarah, died in February, 1826, at the age of eighty-seven years. Silas Burley died March 14, 1833, aged seventy-one years, and his wife, Deborah, died September 30, 1845, aged eighty-two years. Deborah Burley was responsible for the name of Dumpling Pond, North Mianus, town of Greenwich, in the following manner: She was noted for the excellence of her cooking and took great pride in her reputation. On one occasion when her husband and his farm hands came in from